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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006232

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE; OSD FOR ISP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2013

TAGS: MARR PREL MOPS MASS TU

SUBJECT: TGS REQUESTS HLDG PROPOSAL

REF: EDELMAN-CROUCH OCT 1 TELECON

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch. Reasons: 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is an action request. See para 3.

¶2. (C) During his initial meeting with TGS Deputy Chief General Mehmet Ilker Basbug on October 2 (septel), the Ambassador informed the general that the US response to the Turkish proposed dates of November 17-19 for the next High Level Defense Group (HLDG) meeting was complicated by the imminent departure from government service of ASD Crouch who would normally chair the US side at the meeting. SECDEF had reviewed the options and had chosen DASD Mira Ricardel to serve as acting ASD until the lengthy process of confirming a permanent successor could be completed. As Basbug had earlier extolled the value of the HLDG and the need to use it to improve Turkey-US mil-mil relations, the Ambassador encouraged the general to consider going forward with the meeting in November; the alternative (of waiting for a permanent successor) would likely require waiting until at least sometime in the spring next year. Basbug asked for a formal response to the Turkish dates which he could consider.

¶3. (C) Action request: Although Basbug, who heads the Turkish side at the HLDG, did not agree on the spot, neither did he reject the idea of holding the meeting with an acting ASD out of hand. We therefore recommend that Dr. Crouch write a letter proposing then-A/ASD Ricardel and Basbug convene the HLDG sometime during the week of November 17-22, as TGS proposed. Simultaneously, Dr. Crouch might call Basbug to express his regrets at missing the HLDG, and to encourage Basbug's acceptance.

EDELMAN